

Physical Activity and Health: The Evidence Explained



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by Adrienne E. Hardman

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Physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It has been linked to a wide range of health benefits, including a reduced risk of chronic diseases, improved mental health, and a longer life. In this article, we will take a closer look at the evidence supporting these claims and provide guidance on how to get the most out of physical activity.

The Benefits of Physical Activity

The benefits of physical activity are numerous and well-documented. Some of the most well-known benefits include:

- **Reduced risk of chronic diseases:** Physical activity has been shown to reduce the risk of a number of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.

- **Improved mental health:** Physical activity can help to improve mental health by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. It can also improve sleep quality and mood.
- **Longer life:** Physical activity can help you live a longer life. Studies have shown that people who are physically active have a lower risk of dying from all causes, including heart disease, cancer, and stroke.

How Much Physical Activity Do I Need?

The amount of physical activity you need depends on your age, sex, and overall health. However, most adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week. This can be broken down into smaller chunks, such as 30 minutes of activity five days a week. If you are new to exercise, start slowly and gradually increase the amount of activity you do over time.

In addition to aerobic activity, it is also important to do muscle-strengthening exercises at least twice per week. These exercises can help to build and maintain muscle mass, which is important for overall strength and mobility.

What Types of Physical Activity Are Best?

The best type of physical activity for you is one that you enjoy and that you can stick to over time. Some popular types of physical activity include:

- Walking
- Running
- Cycling

- Swimming
- Dancing
- Sports

If you are not sure what type of physical activity is right for you, talk to your doctor or a certified personal trainer.

How to Get Started with Physical Activity

Getting started with physical activity can be daunting, but it doesn't have to be. Here are a few tips to help you get started:

- **Start slowly:** Don't try to do too much too soon. Start with a small amount of activity and gradually increase the amount of time and intensity of your workouts over time.
- **Find an activity you enjoy:** If you don't enjoy the activity you're doing, you're less likely to stick with it. Find an activity that you find fun and that you can see yourself doing on a regular basis.
- **Make it a part of your routine:** The best way to make physical activity a part of your life is to make it a part of your routine. Schedule time for physical activity in your day and stick to it as much as possible.
- **Don't be afraid to ask for help:** If you need help getting started with physical activity, talk to your doctor or a certified personal trainer. They can help you develop a plan that is safe and effective for you.

Physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It has been linked to a wide range of health benefits, including a reduced risk of chronic diseases, improved mental health, and a longer life.

If you are not currently physically active, talk to your doctor or a certified personal trainer about how to get started. With a little effort, you can make physical activity a part of your life and reap the many benefits it has to offer.

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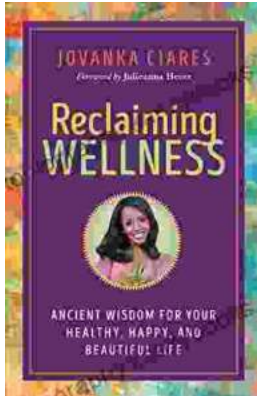
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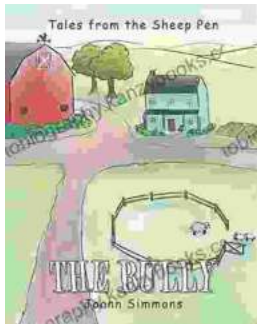
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